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In One Act.

By Jacques H. M. M. M.

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TITTLEBAT A FATHER!

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ZACHARIAH TITTLEBAT.

—

COSTUMES. — MODERN.

—

PROPERTIES.

Parlor furniture.

TMP96-C07511

EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R., means first entrance right, and right. L., first entrance left, and left. S.E.R., second entrance right. S.E.L., second entrance left. T.E.R., third entrance right. T.E.L., third entrance left. F.E.R., fourth entrance right. F.E.L., fourth entrance left. U.E.R., upper entrance right. U.E.L., upper entrance left. R.F., right flat. L.F., left flat. R.C., right of centre. L.C., left of centre. C., centre. C.D., centre doors. C.R., centre towards right. C.L., centre towards left. Observing you are supposed to face the audience.

TITTLEBAT A FATHER!

SCENE.—*A Parlor. Plain furniture.*

Enter ZACHARIAH TITTLEBAT, in dressing-gown and cap.

Zachariah. Congratulate me! My name is Zach Tittlebat; and this happy morning, at half-past two—rather cloudy—the afore-said Tittlebat has been declared a father; a father of the most bouncing kind—I mean the insect, which means the baby, is of the most bouncing kind! That's it! At half-past two, remember! Heaven has granted my prayer, and made this Tittlebat a father; I have come to announce it to you. Sh—sh! I am the father of a race of Tittlebats! My first-born is in the next room, asleep in a cradle all covered with lace and muslin. I insisted that it would be a boy, every member of the family said "it would probably be a girl." A tremendous boy! A bouncing Tittlebat! I think I can say without vanity, a boy who does me credit. My wife, who is an angel of goodness, but not very, *very* pretty, gives out that the child looks like her. She has got this idea into her head, and, to tell you the truth, I think it an entire mistake; but, I never contradict her in anything. If you could see my son and heir but for one moment, his figure, his finely-cut

profile, his graceful movements, his noble brow, the proud turn of his nose, his blue, blue eyes, you would say at once, "He is the image of his father." (*Puts his thumbs in vest arm-holes and struts.*) His godfather and godmother are already chosen, and suggestions for his name are pouring in by the dozen. In short, everybody is intriguing, imploring, working, for the honor of giving him his name. Why, there wouldn't be more noise at a disputed election; and not content with baptizing him, my friends pretend to the gift of prophecy, and are foretelling his whole future career. The women say he will lead a military life, and rank as colonel from the very first. His godfather, with simpler ideas, dreams of a notary's life for him. An uncle, a manufacturer, wants him to be brought up in his business; while my cousin, the lawyer, clamors for the legal profession. "Nothing like a farmer's life," says the grandfather, who is an agriculturist. "Believe me," says the doctor, "the medical profession is the best for him." Good heavens! I'm sure I don't know what his calling will be twenty years hence; don't worry me about it any more—all I hope is, that he will have money. His future is a secondary consideration in my mind. I would rather wait until he begins to cut his teeth before thinking of what he is fitted for. Besides—(*Cries heard outside*)—halloa, what's that? What are those fearful cries? It's my heir waking up—he always wakes up like this. He will continue to cry for a whole hour, without an instant's cessation. Now I find this delightful, for it shows he has his father's lungs. The moment he sees me, his face lights up—but I don't tell his mother so, for she insists that he cries whenever I go near him. (*Cries repeated.*) There he goes again! Yes, you little tyrant, here I am! He thinks no one can compare with his father. (*To the audience.*) I tell you this in the strictest confidence. Well, it's very natural, a first-born. Oh, he is the exact image of me, which delights me immensely. What father is not pleased to see his own features reproduced in his son? And the boy is doing well—the bouncing infant is doing well. Yes, the bouncing Tittlebat is doing well! And so is the mother—of which the father is proud, that both mother and child are doing well. And then—but I am so full of happiness, that I forget how I must be tiring you with my own private

affairs. Time seems so short, when we are talking of those we love; and besides, I can't help it. One is not a father every day. Near this fresh and pure little creature, I feel bright and gay. I think I'll go and see if he has not grown while I've been here talking to you. Yes, I know I have been rattling on absurdly, but my heart is full—so please forgive me, and allow me to invite you all to the christening.

(Child cries—he runs out.)

CURTAIN.

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